

**VESSEL OPERATORS HAZARDOUS MATERIALS ASSOCIATION
(VOHMA)
ANNUAL TRANSPORTATION FORUM
28 OCT 98
RADM R. C. NORTH**

INTRODUCTION

THANK YOU AND GOOD AFTERNOON. IT IS INDEED A DISTINCT
PLEASURE AND HONOR TO SPEAK AT YOUR ANNUAL
TRANSPORTATION FORUM.

MY THANKS TO MS. HALDIS FERN, MS. LARA CURRIE AND VOHMA FOR
INVITING ME. I CERTAINLY APPRECIATE THE OPPORTUNITY YOU
HAVE PRESENTED TO MYSELF AND OTHERS FROM THE COAST
GUARD TO BE WITH YOU TO SHARE OUR THOUGHTS ON ISSUES
OF COMMON INTEREST IN THE AREA OF MARITIME HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS TRANSPORTATION.

AND WELCOME TO THOSE OF YOU FROM OUTSIDE OF
WASHINGTON, DC! IT'S SAID THAT WASHINGTON, DC IS 36
SQUARE MILES OF BUREAURACY SURROUNDED BY REALITY.
THANK YOU FOR BRINGING SOME THREADS OF REALITY
INTO THE BUREAURACY. WE NEED IT EVERY ONCE IN A
WHILE.

LOOKING OVER THE AGENDA FOR THIS FORUM, I NOTICE THAT IT IS A COMPREHENSIVE ONE DISCUSSING VARIOUS REGULATORY UPDATES, REFORMATTING THE IMDG CODE, VEHMA CITAT COOPERATIVE TRAINING, EMERGENCY RESPONSE SITUATIONS AND INTERMODAL ISSUES TO NAME A FEW.

MY REMARKS TODAY WILL ELABORATE FIRST ON WHAT THE COAST GUARD IS DOING – BOTH AS REGULATOR AND FACILITATOR - IN THE SPECIFIC AREA OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT THAT I KNOW HAS A DIRECT DAY-TO-DAY IMPACT ON YOU, AND THEN ON THE BROADER AREA OF THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE WHICH HAS AN IMPACT ON THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION INDUSTRY IN GENERAL.

WITH REGARDS TO PACKAGED HAZARDOUS MATERIAL TRANSPORTATION, EACH MORNING I RECEIVE AN OPERATIONS BRIEF ON HAZMAT INCIDENTS FROM THE NIGHT BEFORE. THESE INCIDENTS USUALLY INVOLVE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS THAT ARE NOT PACKAGED – AN INDICATION OF THE LEVEL OF SAFETY OF YOUR INDUSTRY.

HISTORICALLY, BUT PERHAPS EVEN MORE SO IN THIS ERA OF GLOBAL MARKETS, THE MARINE SAFETY DIRECTORATE OF THE COAST GUARD FINDS ITSELF IN THE POSITION AS BOTH A REGULATOR AND A FACILITATOR OF MARINE TRANSPORTATION. WITH RESPECT TO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS STANDARDS DEVELOPMENT AND ENFORCEMENT, THE COAST GUARD ACTS AS A REGULATOR TO “PROTECT THE PUBLIC AND THE ENVIRONMENT.”

IN OUR ROLE AS A FACILITATOR, WE ARE CHARGED WITH ENSURING THE STANDARDS THAT WE DEVELOP AND ENFORCE, DO NOT PLACE U.S. MARKET INTERESTS AT A DISADVANTAGE IN TODAY’S WORLD ECONOMY.

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF THIS REGULATOR/ FACILITATOR ROLE FOR THE COAST GUARD IS IN WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT. ON ONE HAND, WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT DEMANDS OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS BE SAFE, SECURE, AND ENVIRONMENTALLY SOUND. ON THE OTHER HAND, WATERWAYS MANAGEMENT DEMANDS THAT OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS ALSO BE EFFICIENT, ACCESSIBLE, AND ECONOMICALLY VIABLE.

THAT DUAL ROLE OF REGULATOR/FACILITATOR MAY, AT FIRST
BLUSH, SEEM TO BE DICHOTOMY – BUT IT IS NOT. SAFETY
FACILITATES COMMERCE – THEY ARE INEXTRICABLY LINKED.

HAZMAT STANDARDS AND COMPLIANCE ACTIVITIES

IN TODAY’S GLOBAL ECONOMY, EFFECTIVE REGULATIONS MUST
HAVE A GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE. THIS IS ESPECIALLY SO FOR THE
BUSINESS OF VOHMA’S MEMBER COMPANIES AS THEY STRIVE
TO PROVIDE THE BEST POSSIBLE INTERNATIONAL
TRANSPORTATION SERVICES, INCLUDING THE TRANSPORT OF
DANGEROUS GOODS. INTERNATIONALLY HARMONIZED
STANDARDS AND REGULATIONS IMPROVE COMPLIANCE AND
SAFETY, WHILE AT THE SAME TIME FACILITATING TRADE.

OUR PRIMARY EFFORT IN THIS REGARD CONTINUES TO BE THE U.S.
LED INITIATIVE TO HAVE THE INTERNATIONAL MARITIME
DANGEROUS GOODS (IMDG) CODE REFORMATTED INTO A MORE
USER FRIENDLY, INTERNATIONALLY HARMONIZED
PUBLICATION. THIS PROJECT WILL CONTINUE TO BE THE FOCAL
POINT OF OUR EFFORTS OVER THE NEXT 18 MONTHS AT THE
INTERNATIONAL MARITIME ORGANIZATION’S DANGEROUS
GOODS, SOLID CARGOES AND CONTAINERS (DSC)
SUBCOMMITTEE.

THE TREMENDOUS BREADTH AND DEPTH OF THIS PROJECT HAS KEPT PERSONNEL IN THE COAST GUARD, DOT'S RESEARCH AND SPECIAL PROGRAMS ADMINISTRATION (RSPA), AND OUR SOLAS WORKING GROUP GAINFULLY EMPLOYED SINCE FEBRUARY 1996.

GREAT EFFORTS HAVE BEEN MADE TO ENSURE THE REFORMATTED IMDG CODE HAS BEEN HARMONIZED AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE WITH BOTH THE U.N. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS AND OUR OWN DOMESTIC HAZARDOUS MATERIALS REGULATIONS FOUND IN 49 CFR. ALTHOUGH ONE OF THE INITIAL TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PROJECT HAD BEEN TO NOT CHANGE THE CONTENT OF THE IMDG CODE, IT WAS DECIDED EARLY ON THAT IF THE PROJECT WERE TO BE SUCCESSFUL, MUCH WOULD HAVE TO CHANGE.

CHANGES TO THE PACKING INSTRUCTIONS, PORTABLE TANK DESIGN CRITERIA, AND MEDICAL FIRST AID WILL CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO FACILITATING TRADE. THE FINAL PRODUCT OF THIS PROJECT WILL BE MORE EASILY UPDATED TO KEEP PACE WITH THE U.N. RECOMMENDATIONS, AND MORE WIDELY AVAILABLE BECAUSE OF REDUCED COST AND INCREASED PORTABILITY.

THESE FACTORS CAN ONLY CONTRIBUTE POSITIVELY TO AN IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE LEVEL. AN IMPROVED KNOWLEDGE LEVEL, WHICH IS AN IMPORTANT HUMAN FACTOR, WILL, IN TURN, LEAD TO IMPROVED COMPLIANCE AND OUR OVERALL GOAL OF IMPROVED SAFETY. PROVIDING A CODE THAT IS MORE UNIFORM ACROSS THE MODES, MORE IN ALIGNMENT WITH OUR OWN DOMESTIC REGULATIONS, AND GIVES INDUSTRY MORE FLEXIBILITY IN SUCH AREAS AS TANK AND PACKAGE SELECTION.

MY STAFF IN THE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS STANDARDS DIVISION HAS BEEN WORKING CLOSELY WITH DOT'S RSPA TO NOT ONLY HARMONIZE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS WITH OUR DOMESTIC REGULATIONS WHERE POSSIBLE BUT ALSO TO ENSURE THAT OUR REGULATIONS ARE KEPT CURRENT WITH THE LATEST INTERNATIONAL REQUIREMENTS. IN PARTICULAR, THE HM-215C RULEMAKING SHOWS THE COMMITMENT OF DOT AND THE COAST GUARD TO KEEP 49 CFR HARMONIZED WITH THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS IN THE 10TH EDITION OF THE U.N. RECOMMENDATIONS ON THE TRANSPORT OF DANGEROUS GOODS (U.N. ORANGE BOOK), THE ICAO TECHNICAL INSTRUCTIONS, AND THE 29TH AMENDMENT OF THE IMDG CODE.

ON THE COMPLIANCE AND ENFORCEMENT SIDE OF OUR ORGANIZATION, THE CONTAINER INSPECTION PROGRAM (CIP) HAS MATURED CONSIDERABLY SINCE ITS INCEPTION IN 1994. IT IS TO THE POINT WHERE IT IS A RELATIVELY SMOOTHLY OPERATING, STAND ALONE ACTIVITY AT MOST OF OUR FIELD UNITS.

OVER THE COURSE OF THE PAST YEAR, THE CONTAINER INSPECTION PROGRAM HAS BEEN INTEGRATED INTO A BROADER MARITIME RISK MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK FOR OPTIMIZING COAST GUARD RESOURCES AND PERFORMANCE IMPACTS. WE REEVALUATED EXISTING PROCEDURES - AND CONTINUE TO DO SO – SO THAT WE CAN:

- BETTER TARGET HIGH TRANSPORTATION RISK COMMODITIES FOR INSPECTION
- IMPROVE CONSISTENCY ON A NATIONAL LEVEL AND REMOVE IMPEDIMENTS TO THE ECONOMICAL MOVEMENT OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS IN MARITIME COMMERCE; AND
- LINK CONTAINER INSPECTION ACTIVITIES TO DESIRED OUTCOMES IN ORDER TO OPTIMIZE INCREASINGLY TASKED RESOURCES AT OUR FIELD UNITS.

NOT ONLY HAVE WE TRIED TO IMPROVE THE CONSISTENCY OF THE CONTAINER INSPECTION PROGRAM THROUGHOUT ALL U.S. PORTS, WE ARE - UNDER THE THEME OF “ONE DOT”- IN THE PROCESS OF STANDARDIZING THE COAST GUARD RECOMMENDED PENALTY ASSESSMENT SCHEME FOUND IN 49 CFR WITH THAT OF RSPA.

WE ARE ALSO EVALUATING THE FEASIBILITY OF INSTITUTING A COAST GUARD “TICKETING PROGRAM” SIMILAR TO THAT OF RSPA. IF A MINOR VIOLATION OCCURS, THE PROPOSED PROGRAM MIGHT ALLOW THE COAST GUARD INSPECTION TEAM THE OPTION OF EITHER ISSUING A FORMAL VIOLATION OR WRITING A “TICKET” AT HALF THE RECOMMENDED PENALTY AMOUNT. THIS TICKETING PROGRAM WOULD BE BENEFICIAL FROM BOTH AN ADMINISTRATIVE AND ECONOMIC STANDPOINT TO THE COAST GUARD AND INDUSTRY.

LCDR STEVE O’MALLEY, SUPERVISOR OF THE CONTAINER INSPECTION TRAINING AND ASSISTANCE TEAM, WILL BE SPEAKING WITH YOU LATER THIS AFTERNOON. IN ADDITION, LT TOM SHERMAN, OUR NATIONAL CONTAINER INSPECTION PROGRAM COORDINATOR IS IN THE AUDIENCE TODAY. I’M SURE YOU WILL BE HEARING MORE FROM BOTH OF THEM ABOUT THIS AND OTHER ASPECTS OF OUR INITIATIVES DURING FORMAL AND INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS.

CERTAINLY ONE WAY FOR INDUSTRY TO INCREASE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF COAST GUARD'S FACILITATION EFFORTS IS TO PARTNER TOGETHER WITH US. VOHMA'S INFORMAL PARTNERING EFFORTS WITH THE COAST GUARD ARE CERTAINLY A FINE MANIFESTATION OF YOUR ON-GOING COMMITMENT TO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS TRANSPORTATION SAFETY IN PARTICULAR AND MARITIME SAFETY, IN GENERAL.

IN PARTICULAR THE VOHMA/CITAT COOPERATIVE TRAINING PROGRAM HELPS ESTABLISH THOSE GOVERNMENT/ INDUSTRY COMMUNICATION PATHS VITAL TO COAST GUARD FACILITATING EFFORTS. IN ADDITION, THE TRIP REPORTS THAT THE CITAT PERSONNEL PREPARE AT THE END OF THEIR 'SHIPRIDES' SERVE AS GREAT LISTENING POSTS FOR THOSE OF US IN WASHINGTON ON THE CURRENT STATE OF THE INDUSTRY. THE TRAINING YOUR MEMBER COMPANIES PROVIDE TO COAST GUARD PERSONNEL IS KEY TO MAXIMIZING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COAST GUARD'S ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITIES WHILE MINIMIZING THE IMPACT ON INDUSTRY IN THE WAY OF DELAYED SHIPMENTS AND SIMILAR CONCERNS.

I WOULD ALSO LIKE TO COMMEND YOUR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS WHO ARE PARTICIPATING IN THE INDUSTRY/CITAT TRAINING PROGRAM. EXPOSING FREIGHT FORWARDERS, CONSOLIDATORS, AND OTHERS TO HAZARDOUS MATERIALS REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS CERTAINLY SHOWS A UNITED FRONT BETWEEN VESSEL OPERATORS AND THE COAST GUARD AND ULTIMATELY WILL PROTECT THE PUBLIC AND TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM BY INCREASING COMPLIANCE.

MTS

NOW I WOULD LIKE TO TURN OUR FOCUS TO THE BROADER CONTEXT OF OUR MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM AND OUR MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE. AT LAST YEAR'S FORUM CAPTAIN GILMOUR, MY DIRECTOR OF MARINE SAFETY FIELD ACTIVITIES, TALKED TO YOU ABOUT THIS RELATIVELY NEW FOCUS IN OUR BUSINESS PLAN. LET ME BRIEFLY DESCRIBE WHERE, I BELIEVE, WE STAND AS A NATION RELATIVE TO WATERWAYS, PORTS AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS AND HOW FAR WE'VE COME - SINCE YOUR LAST MEETING - TO MEET THE CHALLENGES WE FACE IN THE 21ST CENTURY.

YOU ALL KNOW THAT THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION AND MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE OF THE U.S. IS VITAL TO OUR INTERMODAL NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, AND ULTIMATELY THE NATIONAL INTEREST.

IT IS SAID THAT STATISTICS ARE JUST NUMBERS IN SEARCH OF AN ARGUMENT. WELL HERE ARE SOME IMPRESSIVE NUMBERS THAT FORM A PRETTY GOOD ARGUMENT FOR A ROBUST MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM:

- OVER TWO BILLION METRIC TONS OF CARGO WORTH OVER ONE TRILLION DOLLARS TRANSIT OUR WATERWAYS ANNUALLY.
- 10 MILLION BARRELS OF OIL ARE IMPORTED DAILY, ALMOST ALL OF IT BY WATER.
- EXCLUDING MEXICO AND CANADA, 95% OF OUR FOREIGN TRADE AND 25% OF OUR DOMESTIC TRADE DEPENDS ON MARITIME TRANSPORTATION.
- OVER 90 MILLION PASSENGERS EMBARK FERRIES, CRUISE SHIPS, GAMING VESSELS AND TOUR SHIPS FROM U.S. PORTS.
- OVER 26,000 COMMERCIAL FISHING VESSELS HARVEST FOOD FROM THE SEA.
- AND TENS OF MILLIONS OF AMERICANS USE THE NATION'S 20 MILLION RECREATIONAL BOATS.

- MARINE TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRIBUTES OVER 78 BILLION DOLLARS TO THE U.S. GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT AND GENERATES 16 MILLIONS JOBS
- 95% OF ALL WEAPONS, SUPPLIES AND U.S. FORCES WERE TRANSPORTED VIA SHIPS DURING DESERT STORM.

AND OUR MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE IS MORE THAN WHARVES, PIERS AND WAREHOUSES. INFRASTRUCTURE ALSO INCLUDES NATURAL AND MAINTAINED CHANNELS, ANCHORAGES, LOCKS, NAVIGATION SYSTEMS, CHARTING, BRIDGES, TERMINALS, AND RAIL AND HIGHWAY CONNECTIONS - ALL THOSE THINGS THAT FACILITATE SAFE NAVIGATION.

AND IT RANGES FROM THE COASTAL ZONE, THROUGH OUR INLAND WATERWAYS, INCLUDING THE GREAT LAKES AND WESTERN RIVERS OF OUR HEARTLAND. IT'S A "SYSTEM" OF PORTS AND WATERWAYS AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS – INLAND AND COASTAL.

INTERMODALISM IS AS VITAL TO THE HAZARDOUS MATERIALS INDUSTRY, AS IT IS TO THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN GENERAL. I SEE ONLY GROWTH IN THIS REGARD AS EVERY TRANSPORTATION MODE VIES FOR A LARGER ROLE IN MOVING GOODS WITHIN OUR GLOBAL DISTRIBUTION SYSTEMS.

HOWEVER, THE U.S. IS AT A CRITICAL JUNCTURE, A FORK IN THE ROAD PERHAPS, WITH RESPECT TO THE FUTURE OF PORTS AND WATERWAYS INFRASTRUCTURE. MANY OF OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS IN THE U.S. HAVE AGING INFRASTRUCTURE AND MAY NO LONGER BE UP TO WORLD CLASS STANDARDS. INSTEAD, THEY MAY BE REDUCING U.S. COMPETITIVENESS AND INCREASING RISKS TO SAFETY AND THE MARINE ENVIRONMENT.

AND, THE STRESS ON OUR MARITIME INFRASTRUCTURE IS INCREASING. LET'S CONSIDER SOME TRENDS AND CONCERNS AS WE MOVE INTO THE NEXT CENTURY:

- INCREASED TRAFFIC ON OUR WATERWAYS OF ALL TYPES; WORLD MARITIME TRADE IS EXPECTED TO INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY (TWO TO THREE TIMES) BY THE YEAR 2020. WILL OUR NATION'S PORTS, WATERWAYS AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS BE ABLE TO CARRY THE LOAD IN A SAFE AND EFFICIENT MANNER?
- PROJECTED INCREASE IN THE USE OF PASSENGER VESSELS, ESPECIALLY FERRIES. AT THE SAME TIME COMMERCIAL CARGO TRAFFIC IS EXPANDING, RECREATIONAL AND LEISURE USE IS GROWING, AND AN INCREASING NUMBER OF COMMUTERS ARE LOOKING TO HIGH SPEED FERRIES. CAN WE ACCOMODATE ALL OF THESE USERS BY CONDUCTING BUSINESS AS USUAL?

- INCREASED CONCERN BY THE PUBLIC OVER SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT WHICH CAN'T BE IGNORED.
- EMERGING REQUIREMENTS TO PROTECT OUR TRANSPORTATION INFRASTRUCTURE FROM SECURITY THREATS INCLUDING TERRORISM, ATTACKS ON COMPUTER SYSTEMS, AND THE USE OF WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION IN OUR PORTS.

SUFFICE IT TO SAY THAT MEETING THESE CHALLENGES IS MORE DIFFICULT DUE TO THE FACT THAT OUR WATERWAYS ARE CURRENTLY MANAGED BY A HOST OF FEDERAL AGENCIES INCLUDING COAST GUARD, MARAD, U.S. ARMY CORPS OF ENGINEERS, NOAA, EPA, ST. LAWRENCE SEAWAY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION AND OTHERS. AND OF COURSE WHEN YOU GET TO THE LOCAL LEVEL, MORE ENTITIES, STATE AND LOCAL, ENTER THE PICTURE AS WELL. WE MUST ELIMINATE THE GAPS, OVERLAPS, AND STOVEPIPES IN PLANNING FOR PORTS AND WATERWAYS OF THE FUTURE.

IF LEFT ON OUR CURRENT COURSE, THERE IS TREMENDOUS POTENTIAL FOR OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS TO BECOME BOTTLENECKS IN THE NATIONAL TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM WITH INCREASINGLY HIGHER RISK TO MARITIME SAFETY AND THE ENVIRONMENT.

RLS/THEMES

OVER THE PAST YEAR, WE HAVE BEGUN A SERIOUS EFFORT TO COORDINATE WITH THESE OTHER AGENCIES AS WELL AS TALK WITH STAKEHOLDERS ABOUT THEIR VIEWS ON THE CURRENT AND FUTURE STATE OF OUR WATERWAYS.

WE NEEDED DIRECT STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT - TO ENSURE A CORRECT APPROACH; TO REALLY DETERMINE THE STATUS OF PORTS AND WATERWAYS TODAY; TO DETERMINE THE NEEDS FOR THE NEXT CENTURY; AND TO DETERMINE WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO MEET THOSE NEEDS AT THE LOCAL LEVEL -- THIS IS NOT A WASHINGTON SOLUTION.

LAST SPRING THE COAST GUARD AND MARAD JOINTLY LED SEVEN TWO-DAY REGIONAL LISTENING SESSIONS ON OUR NATION'S MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM – WATERWAYS, PORTS AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS.

TRAVELING TO NEW ORLEANS, OAKLAND, NEW YORK, CLEVELAND, ST. LOUIS, CHARLESTON, AND PORTLAND OREGON, WE LED A COALITION OF FEDERAL AGENCIES I MENTIONED EARLIER.

OUR GOAL WAS TO GET INPUT FROM ALL FACETS OF MARINE INDUSTRY REGARDING THE MOST CRITICAL ISSUES FACING OUR WATERWAYS, PORTS AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS. I WAS ABLE TO PERSONALLY PARTICIPATE IN FOUR OF THESE SESSIONS, AND FOUND THEM VERY ENLIGHTENING.

ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE ISSUES RAISED DURING THE REGIONAL SESSIONS SEEMED REGIONAL IN NATURE, WE'VE FOUND THAT OFTEN WHAT APPEARED TO BE REGIONAL ISSUES WERE REALLY NATIONAL ISSUES AS WELL – REGIONS ARE INTERDEPENDENT. FOR EXAMPLE, IN THE WESTERN RIVERS REGION, THE LOCK AND DAM SYSTEM IMPACTS GRAIN SHIPMENTS TO NEW ORLEANS, LA AND THE GULF REGION.

THERE WERE MANY RECURRING THEMES THROUGHOUT ALL OF THE REGIONAL LISTENING SESSION, INCLUDING:

- LACK OF COORDINATION. NOT ONLY AT THE FEDERAL LEVEL, WHERE AGENCIES DO NOT COORDINATE THEIR EFFORTS TO PROVIDE COMMON MANAGEMENT OVERSIGHT OF CRITICAL ISSUES, BUT ALSO BETWEEN FEDERAL, STATE, LOCAL, AND PUBLIC ENTITIES.

- THERE WAS A DESIRE FOR CREATING REGIONAL FEDERAL AGENCY PARTNERSHIPS AND HARBOR SAFETY COMMITTEES AT THE PORT LEVEL TO BETTER COORDINATE FEDERAL ACTIVITY AND INTERFACE WITH STAKEHOLDERS.
- INCREASED CONGESTION AND CONFLICT ON OUR WATERWAYS DUE TO INCREASED USAGE BY ALL KINDS OF VESSELS – FISHING, RECREATIONAL, AND COMMERCIAL.
- OUR INFRASTRUCTURE’S QUESTIONABLE ABILITY TO HANDLE INCREASED LEVELS OF TRAFFIC IN THE FUTURE, ESPECIALLY WITH THE INCREASING SIZE OF CONTAINER AND PASSENGER VESSELS.
- CHALLENGES IN UPGRADING AND MODERNIZING OUR INFRASTRUCTURE – INCLUDING FUNDING, COORDINATION, AND DREDGING ISSUES.
- ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES SUCH AS CONTAMINATION FROM SEDIMENTS, NON-INDIGENOUS SPECIES, RESIDUE FROM IMPORTED CONTAINERS, BALLAST WATER, AND CHEMICAL AND FUEL SPILLS.
- THE POTENTIAL FOR TERRORISM AND CRIMINAL ACTIVITY IN OUR PORTS.

- PIECE-MEAL AND UNCOORDINATED APPLICATION OF TECHNOLOGIES FOR THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM.
- THE NEED FOR BETTER COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION MANAGEMENT BETWEEN THE MARINE INDUSTRY, PORT AUTHORITIES AND GOVERNMENT – WATERWAY USERS AND MANAGEMENT DO NOT HAVE THE INFORMATION THEY NEED TO OPERATE SAFELY AND EFFICIENTLY.
- WE NEED TO DEVELOP SYSTEMS AND RULES WHICH ARE EFFICIENT AND ABLE TO PASS NECESSARY INFORMATION TO ALL INVOLVED PARTIES.

MTS CONFERENCE

THE FEEDBACK GATHERED FROM THE SEVEN LISTENING SESSIONS HAVE FORMED THE BASIS FOR A NATIONAL MARITIME TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONFERENCE TO BE HOSTED BY SECRETARY SLATER 17-19 NOVEMBER.

PARTICIPATING IN THIS CONFERENCE ALONG WITH SECRETARY SLATER AND OTHER AGENCY SENIOR EXECUTIVES, WILL BE REPRESENTATIVES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT, INDUSTRY, AND A BROAD RANGE OF INTEREST AND STAKEHOLDER GROUPS - INCLUDING SOME OF THE REGIONAL LISTENING SESSION PARTICIPANTS. I AM PLEASED TO SEE THAT A NUMBER OF YOUR MEMBER COMPANIES WILL BE REPRESENTED AT THIS CONFERENCE SUCH AS APL LIMITED, SEA-LAND SERVICES, AND CROWLEY AMERICAN TRANSPORT.

THE OBJECTIVES THAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE AT THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM CONFERENCE ARE, I BELIEVE, VERY MUCH A NEEDED STEP DOWN THE RIGHT PATH. THEY INCLUDE BOTH PROCESS AND MANAGEMENT, SPECIFIC ISSUES, AND SOME SPECIFIC PROBLEM AREAS.

- FIRST, ACHIEVING A COMMON UNDERSTANDING - BETWEEN GOVERNMENT AND STAKEHOLDERS - OF THE PROBLEMS FACING THE SYSTEM.
- REACH CONSENSUS ON A “VISION” - AND A COMPREHENSIVE DESCRIPTION - OF THE MTS FOR THE YEAR 2020.
- ESTABLISH A MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FRAMEWORK FOR THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM THAT INCLUDES: A MECHANISM FOR IMPROVED FEDERAL AND STAKEHOLDER COORDINATION IN PLANNING, OPERATIONS, FUNDING, AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MTS AT THE NATIONAL, REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVELS.

- WORK KEY ISSUES NOTED ABOVE THAT WERE IDENTIFIED DURING THE REGIONAL LISTENING SESSIONS.
- AND FINALLY, OBTAIN COMMITMENT FOR FOLLOW-UP ACTION AND MANAGE IT THROUGH THE MANAGEMENT MECHANISM THAT I MENTIONED EARLIER.

THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE (AND THE REGIONAL LISTENING SESSIONS) MARK THE BEGINNING OF A PROCESS. WE WILL SEE MANY ORGANIZATIONS IN AND OUTSIDE OF THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT WORKING ALONG WITH STAKEHOLDERS TO IMPROVE THE NATION'S MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM, AND BRING US TOWARDS ACHIEVEMENT OF OUR NATIONAL VISION FOR THE SYSTEM.

SO WHAT IS OUR VISION OF THE U.S. MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM? IT IS SAFE, ECONOMICALLY SOUND WORLD CLASS PORTS, WATERWAYS AND INTERMODAL CONNECTIONS THAT PROVIDE NATIONAL SECURITY AND IMPROVE COMPETITIVENESS IN THE GLOBAL MARKET. ALTHOUGH WE ARE BEGINNING THE PROCESS IN WASHINGTON, DC, THE ULTIMATE SOLUTIONS MUST BE AT THE REGIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL.

I'VE TALKED ABOUT OUR ROLES AS REGULATORS AND FACILITATORS AS WE DEAL WITH THE ISSUES FACING TRANSPORTATION OF HAZARDOUS MATERIALS SPECIFICALLY AND THE MARINE TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM IN GENERAL.

IN SUMMARY, I WOULD LIKE TO SAY THAT THE COAST GUARD IS ABLE AND PARTICULARLY WELL SUITED TO SERVE IN ITS ROLE AS BOTH A REGULATOR AND FACILITATOR OF THE MARITIME INDUSTRY. WE HAVE A LONG HISTORY OF CLOSE INDUSTRY CONTACT AND SHARE MANY COMMON GOALS WITH YOU – IN PARTICULAR THE SAFE TRANSPORT OF GOODS. SAFE TO THE PUBLIC, SAFE TO THE MARINER, AND SAFE TO OUR PORT INFRASTRUCTURE.

CONSIDERING THE MANY CHALLENGES BEFORE US AS WE ENTER THE 21ST CENTURY, INFORMAL PARTNERSHIPS, SUCH AS THOSE BETWEEN THE COAST GUARD AND VOHMA, PRESENT AN OPPORTUNITY TO START ADDRESSING SOME OF THESE ISSUES AND THEIR IMPACT ON MARINE SAFETY. THE COAST GUARD CANNOT SERVE IN ITS ROLE AS EITHER REGULATOR OR FACILITATOR WITHOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT.

IT IS INCUMBENT UPON US TO BUILD STRONG PARTNERSHIPS THAT BRING ALL STAKEHOLDERS TO THE TABLE. WE CANNOT SUCCEED OTHERWISE. ALL STAKEHOLDERS ARE DEPENDENT UPON ONE ANOTHER TO ATTAIN THEIR INDIVIDUAL GOALS AS WELL AS NATIONAL GOALS.

IN MY MIND, AND IN KEEPING WITH THE VIEWS OF THE SECRETARY OF TRANSPORTATION, THE FUTURE OF THE MARITIME TRANSPORT INDUSTRY AND OUR PORTS AND WATERWAYS DEPENDS ON FULL STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT. WE MUST WORK JOINTLY TOWARDS DEFINING THE VISION FOR PORTS AND WATERWAYS OF THE 21ST CENTURY AND DETERMINING WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE TO ATTAIN THAT VISION.

THANK YOU.